

Semper Vigilare; Overcoming Complacency



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What's the Problem?

Complacency (lack of hazard awareness or attention to task) is the most often cited “root cause” for accidents and injuries

Complacency

Com-pla-cent - pleased, especially with oneself or one's merits, advantages, situation, etc. *often without awareness of some potential danger* or defect; self-satisfied or smug satisfaction with an existing situation, condition, etc.

smug – contentedly confident of one's ability, superiority, or correctness; complacent

“Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there”

- Will Rogers

Contentment

Con·tent·ed - *Accepting one's situation (or life) with equanimity and satisfaction*

Healthy or Positive Satisfaction: being satisfied with preparation and effort given to a task; understanding that while you can control your effort (thoughts and actions), results ultimately often are beyond our control

Unhealthy or Negative Satisfaction: Lack of desire or motivation to persist at, finish, improve or excel in an endeavor

"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances."

- Apostle Paul

What Is Complacency?

- Word used to describe people's action or lack of actions in various situations
- Complacency is *not a cause* of unsafe actions
- Reflects level of tolerance for or acceptance of risk in given situations or circumstances
- “State of being” that sets the stage for errors that put people in harm's way

Complacency = Acceptance of Risk

Complacency Errors

ERRORS

Frustration

Rushing

Fatigue

COMPLACENCY

1. Eyes not on Task
2. Mind not on Task
3. Line of Fire
4. Balance, Traction, Grip

How Does This Happen?

Everything we DO or SAY (action) is under some kind of reinforcement

Our current actions and habits reflect our history of success in getting the results we're after

Our success happens in only one of three ways:

- 1) Getting things we *like* to happen,
- 2) Getting things we *don't like* to stop happening, or
- 3) Avoiding things we *don't like* from happening at all

Good Habits are most often the result of *Positive* reinforcement (#1 above)

Bad Habits are most often the result of *Negative* reinforcement (#2 above)

Normalization of Deviance

- Recognize your vulnerabilities
- Execute to exceed standards
- Consider your instincts
- ~~Don't~~ Sweat the Small Stuff



"A man's got to know his limitations"

- (Dirty) Harry Callahan

[normalization of deviance](#)

"The biggest tragedy is seeing a mistake repeated"

- Mike Mullane, Astronaut

Dangerous Mind-Sets

- *Terminal disease of “certainty”*
- *Slipping into “passenger” mode*
- *Over-confidence in our ability to control things*
- *View work in personal cost/benefit terms*
- *Have no desire or see no need to change from the status quo*

*“It isn't **what we** don't know **that** gives us trouble, it's **what we** know that ain't so.”*

- Will Rogers

View of Reality

Is your understanding of the risks you are exposed to accurate or distorted?

Antidote for Complacency

Lower your standard of tolerance for risk while at the same time raise your sensitivity and response to hazards

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” is the slogan of the complacent, the arrogant or the scared. It’s an excuse for inaction, a call to non-arms.”

- Gen. Colin Powell

Lesson in Excellence



Jim taught me how every player should watch game films, for what he did wrong, not for what he did right. "You've got to watch for what you don't want to see," I told our young players. "You have to listen to what you don't want to hear."

- John Madden



7 Warning Signs of Complacency

- 1) Failure to double-check things*
- 2) Frequently on auto-pilot*
- 3) Rarely focused on what you're doing at the moment*
- 4) Don't hear (or ask) many questions during the course of the work day*
- 5) Little time given or action taken to do things better*
- 6) No talk of task-related goals, accomplishments or achievements*
- 7) Lack of pride in performance*

Antidote for Complacency

- 1) *Double-check things you do*
- 2) *Refuse to take short-cuts*
- 3) *Look for ways to outsmart vs. outmuscle your work*
- 4) *Challenge others and be receptive yourself to trying new, better and safer ways of doing things*
- 5) *Give every task your best effort; especially the small assignments that likely will go unnoticed*
- 6) *Turn work tasks into a game; create a simple way to keep score*
- 7) *Keep track of personal best scores and set goals*

Proactive vs. Reactive



“When Karl Wallenda poured his energies into not falling rather than walking the tightrope, he was virtually destined to fail.”

- W. Bennis and B. Nanus

What are we pouring our energies into when it comes to safety?

Keeping Your Edge

What have you found works to keep your focus and attentiveness throughout the day?

“We shall have no better conditions in the future if we are satisfied with all those which we have at present.”

- Thomas Edison

Success Maxim

“The thrill and satisfaction of accomplishment and overcoming obstacles is far greater than the comfort of complacency.”